
Health Care Committee

SSB 5535

Brief Description: Modifying optometry licensing requirements.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Brandland, Berkey, Spanel, Schoesler, Rockefeller, Delvin, Kohl-Welles, Oke and Shin).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires all optometrists to meet standards for the use and prescription of drugs by an established timetable.

Hearing Date: 3/31/05

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The practice of optometry involves the examination of the human eye and the human vision system. Optometrists may test patients' visual acuity, depth and color perception, and the ability to focus and coordinate the eyes; prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses; prescribe visual therapy; and adapt prosthetic eyes. Upon meeting additional requirements, optometrists may also use or prescribe topical or oral drugs for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes and epinephrine by injection for the treatment of anaphylactic shock.

Optometrists may apply topical drugs for diagnostic purposes upon completing 60 hours of didactic and clinical instruction in general and ocular pharmacology; and receiving certification from an accredited institute of higher education. Optometrists may use or prescribe topical drugs for therapeutic purposes upon completing the requirements for diagnostic drugs; completing an additional 75 hours of didactic and clinical instruction in ocular pharmacology, anti-infective drugs, and anti-inflammatory drugs; and receiving certification from an accredited institute of higher education.

Optometrists may use or prescribe an oral drug for a diagnostic or therapeutic purpose, upon meeting the existing requirements for topically applied drugs, completing an additional 16 hours of didactic instruction and eight hours of supervised clinical instruction, and receiving certification from an accredited institute of higher education.

Optometrists may use injectable epinephrine, upon meeting the existing requirements for topically applied drugs, completing an additional four hours of didactic and supervised clinical instruction, and receiving certification from an accredited institute of higher education.

Summary of Bill:

A timetable is established that requires all optometrists to meet education and training standards for using or prescribing drugs.

All optometrists receiving an initial license in Washington on or after January 1, 2006 must meet the standard requirements of the Board of Optometry and meet the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, the requirements to use or prescribe an oral drug, and the requirements for use of injectable epinephrine.

As of January 1, 2008, all optometrists renewing their license must meet the standard requirements of the Board of Optometry and the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.

As of January 1, 2010, all optometrists renewing their license must meet the standard requirements of the Board of Optometry, and the requirements for using topically applied drugs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, the requirements to use or prescribe an oral drug, and the requirements for use of injectable epinephrine.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.